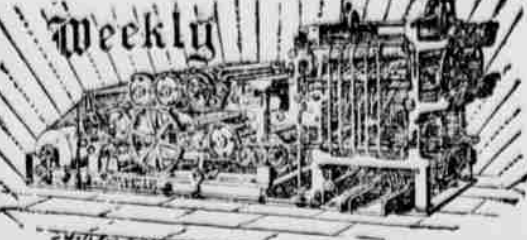


# Burlington



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## THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE.

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,  
The Celebrated Novelist,  
Author of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

### CHAPTER I.

SUMMARY OF EARLIER EVENTS DURING THE MASTER'S WANDERINGS.



HE full truth of this old matter was long been looking for and public curiosity is sure to welcome it. It so befell that I was intimately mingled in the matter of the late years and history of the house, and there does not live one man so able as myself to make these matters plain, or so desirous to narrate them faithfully. I knew the master; on many secret steps of his career I have an authentic memoir in my hand. I sailed with him on his last voyage almost alone; I found one upon that winter's journey of which no many tales have gone abroad, and I was there at the master's death. As for my late Lord Durradeer, I loved him and loved him near twenty years, and thought more of him the more I knew of him. Altogether, I think it not fit that so much evidence should perish; the truth is a debt I owe my lord's memory, and I think my old years will flow more smoothly and my white hair be quiet on the pillow when the debt is paid.

The Duries of Durradeer and Ballantrae were a strange family in the southwest from the days of David I. A rhyme still current in the country said:

Two Duries in Durradeer,  
One to rule and one to ride,  
An ill day for the house,  
And a wiser day for the belds.

Authentic history besides is filled with their exploits, which to our modern eyes seem not very commendable; and the family suffered its full share of those up and downs to which the great houses of Scotland have been ever liable. But all these I pass over, to come to that memorable year 1746, when the foundations of this tragedy were laid.

At that time there dwelt a family of four persons in the house of Durradeer, near St. Brides, on the solitary shore—a chief hold of their race since the Reformation. My old lord, eighth of the name, was not old in years, but he suffered prematurely from the disabilities of age; his place was at the chimney side. There he sat reading, in a lined gown, with few words for any man and very words for none, the model of an old retired housekeeper; and yet his mind very well nourished with study, and reputed in the country to be more cunning than he seemed. The Master of Ballantrae, James in baptism, took from his father the love of serious reading; some of his best papers as well, but that which was only policy in the father became black dissimulation in the son. The face of his behavior was merely popular and wild; he sat late at wine, later at the cards; had the name in the country of "an unco man for the lasses," and was ever in the front of broils. But for all he was the first to go in, yet it was observed he was invariably the last to come off, and his partners in mischief were usually alone to pay the piper. This lack of dexterity got him several ill wishes, but with the rest of the country enhanced his reputation, so that great things were looked for in his future, when he should have gained more gravity. One very black mark he had to his name, but the matter was hushed up at the time, and so defaced by legends before I came into those parts that I scruple to set it down. If it was true it was a horrid fact in one so young, and if false it was a horrid calumny. I think it notable that he had always wanted himself quite implacable, and was taken at his word; so that he had the addition among his neighbors of "an ill man to cross." Here was altogether a young nobleman (not yet 24 in the year '46) who had made a figure in the country beyond his time of life. The less marvel for there were little heard of the second son, Mr. Henry (my late Lord Durradeer), who was neither very old nor yet very able, but an honest, solid sort of lad like many of his neighbors. Little heard, I say; but indeed it was a case of little spoken. He was known among the salmon fishers in the bay, for that was a sport that he assiduously followed; he was an excellent good horse doctor besides, and took a chief hand, almost from a boy, in the management of the estates. How hard a part that was, in the situation of that family, none knows better than myself, nor yet with how little color of justice a man may there acquire the reputation of a tyrant and a miser. The fourth person in the house was Miss Alison Graeme, a near kinswoman, an orphan, and the heir to a considerable fortune which her father had acquired in trade. This money was loudly called for by my lord's necessities; indeed the land was deeply mortgaged, and Miss Alison was designed accordingly to be the master's wife, gladly enough on her side, with how much good will on his another matter. She was a comely girl, and in those days very spirited and self-willed; for the old lord having no daughter of his own, and my lady being long dead, she had grown up as best she might.

To these four came the news of Prince Charles's landing, and set them presently by the ears. My lord, like the chimney keeper that he was, was all for temporizing; Miss Alison held the other side because it appeared romantic; and the master, though I have heard they did not agree often, was for this once of her opinion. The adventure tempted him, as I have said; he was tempted by the opportunity to raise the fortunes of the house, not less by the hope of paying off his private liabilities, which were heavy beyond all opinion. As for Mr. Henry, it ap-

peared he said little enough at first; his part came later on. It took the three a whole day's dispute before they agreed to start a middle course, one son going forth to strike a blow for King James, my lord, and the other staying at home to carry in favor with King George. Doubtless this was my lord's decision; and, as is well known, it was the part played by many considerable families. But the one dispute settled, another opened. For my lord, Miss Alison and Mr. Henry all held the one view; that it was the eldest's part to go out; and the master, what with restlessness and vanity, would at no rate consent to stay at home. My lord pleaded, Miss Alison wept, Mr. Henry was very plain spoken; all was of no avail.

"It is the direct heir of Durradeer that should ride by his king's side," says the master.

"If we were playing a manly part," says Mr. Henry, "there might be some in such talk. But what are we doing? Cheating at cards!"

"We are saving the house of Durradeer," Henry, his father said.

"And see, James," said Mr. Henry, "if I go, and the prince has the upper hand, it will be easy to make your peace with King James. But if you go, and the expedition fails, we divide the right and the title. And what shall I be then?"

"You will be Lord Durradeer," said the master. "I put all I have upon the table."

"I play at no such game," cries Mr. Henry. "I shall be left in such a situation as no man of sense and honor could endure. I shall be neither fish nor flesh," he cried. And a little after he had another expression, perhaps perhaps than he intended. "It is your duty to be here with my father," said he. "You know well enough you are the favorite."

"Ay," said the master. "And there spoke Envy! Would you trip up my heels—Jacob!" said he, and dwelled upon the name maliciously.

Mr. Henry went and walked at the low end of the hall without reply; for he had an excellent gift of silence. Presently he came back.

"I am the eldest and I should go," said he. "And my lord here is the master, and he says I shall go. What say ye to that, my brother?"

"I say this, Henry," returned the master, "that when very obstinate folk are met there are only two ways out: Blows and I think none of us could care to go so far; or the arbitrament of chance—and here is a guinea coin. Will you stand by the toss of the coin?"

"I will stand and fall by it," said Mr. Henry. "Heads, I go; shield, I stay."

The coin was spun and it fell shield. "So there is a lesson for Jacob," says the master. "We shall live to repent of this," says Mr. Henry, and flung out of the hall.

As for Miss Alison, she caught up that piece of gold which had just sent her lover to the wars, and flung it clean through the family shield in the great painted window.

"If you loved me as well as I love you, you would have stayed," cried she.

"I could not love you, dear, so well, loved I not honor more," sang the master.

"Oh!" she cried, "you have no heart; I hope you may be killed!" and she ran from the room, and in tears, to her own chamber.

It seems the master turned to my lord with his most comical manner, and says he, "This looks like a devil of a wife."

the master's favor with the prince, and the ground it was said to stand on; for, by a strange condescension in a man so proud—only that he was a man still more ambitious—no was said to have crept into nobility by trucking to the Irish. Sir Thomas, the Earl of Bective, and his daily comrades, by which course he withdrew himself from his own country folk. All the small intrigues he had a hand in fomenting; thwarted my Lord George upon a thousand points; was always for the novice that seemed payable to the prince, no matter if it was good or bad; and seems upon the whole like the gambler he was all through life to have had less regard to the chances of the campaign than to the greatness of favor he might aspire to, if by any luck it should succeed. For the rest, he did very well in the field; no one questioned that; for he was no coward.

The next was the news of Culloden, which was brought to Durradeer by one of the tenants' sons, the only survivor, he declared, of all those that had gone singing up the hill. By an unfortunate chance, John Paul and Macnechie had that very morning found the guinea piece (which was the root of all the evil) sticking in a holy bush; they had been "up the gait," as the servants say at Durradeer, to the change house; and if they had little left of the guinea, they had less of their wits. What must John Paul do but burst into the hall where the family sat at dinner, and cry the news to them that "Tam Macmorland was but new light at the door, and—worra, worra—there were many to come behind him!"

They took the word in silence like folk condemned; only Mr. Henry carrying his palm to his face, and Miss Alison laying her head outright upon her hands. As for my lord, he was like ashes.

"I have said one son," says he. "And Henry, I will do this justice, it is the kinder that is left."

It was a strange thing to say in such a moment; but my lord had never forgotten Mr. Henry's speech, and he had years of injustice on his conscience. Still it was a strange thing, more than Miss Alison could let pass. She broke out and blamed my lord for his unnatural words, and Mr. Henry, because he was sitting there in safety when his brother lay dead, and himself, because she had given her sweetest words at his departure, calling him the flower of the flock, wringing her hands, protesting her love and crying on him by his name; so that the servants stood astonished.

Mr. Henry got to his feet and stood looking at his chair; it was he that was like ashes now.

"Oh," he burst out suddenly, "I know you loved him!"

"The world knows that, glory be to God!" cries she; and then to Mr. Henry: "There is none but me to know one thing—that you were a traitor to him in your heart."

"God knows," groans he, "it was lost love on both sides."

Time went by in the house after that without much change, only that the war now instead of four, which was a perpetual reminder of their loss. Miss Alison's money, you are to bear in mind, was highly needed for the estates; and the one brother being dead, my old lord soon set his heart upon her marrying the other. Day in, day out, he would work upon her, sitting by the chimney side with his finger in his Latin book, and his eyes set upon her face with a kind of pleasant intensity that became the old gentleman very well. If she wept, he would console her with her, like an ancient man that has seen worse times and begins to think lightly even of sorrow; if she raged, he would fall to reading again in his Latin book, but always with some civil excuse; if she offered as she often did to let him have her money in a gift, he would show her how little it consisted with his honor, and remind her, even if he should consent, that Mr. Henry would certainly refuse.

No doubt this quiet persecution wore away much of her resolve; no doubt, besides, he had a great influence on the girl, having stood in the place of both her parents; and for that matter, she was herself filled with the spirit of the Duries, and would have gone a great way for the glory of Durradeer, but not so far, I think, as to marry my poor patron, had it not been (strangely enough) for the circumstance of his extreme unpopularity.

This was the work of Tam Macmorland. There was not much harm in Tam; but he had that grievous weakness, a long tongue; and as the only man in that country who had been out of rather than in, he came in again; he was sure of listeners. Those that have the underhand in any fighting, I have observed, are ever anxious to persuade themselves they were betrayed. By Tam's account of it, the rebels had been betrayed at every turn and by every officer they had; they had been betrayed at Derby, and betrayed at Falkirk; the night march was a step of treachery of my Lord George's; and Culloden was lost by the treachery of the Macdonalds. This habit of imputing treason grew upon the old lord till at last he began to hate Mr. Henry also. Mr. Henry by his account had betrayed the lords of Durradeer; he had promised to follow with more men, and instead of that he had ridden to King George.

"Ay, and the next day!" Tam would cry. "The pair, bonnie master and the pair, kind lads that rode wae, were hardly over the sea, or he was off—the Judas! Ay, woe—he has his way out; he's to be my lord, no less, and there's money a could crop among the Highland lasses!" And at this, if Tam had been drinking, he would begin to weep.

Let any one speak long enough he will get believers. This view of Mr. Henry's behavior crept about the country by little and little; it was talked upon by folk that knew the contrary but were short of topics; and it was heard and believed and given out for gospel by the ignorant and the ill-willing. Mr. Henry began to be shunned; yet awhile, and the commoners began to murmur as he went by, and the women (who are always the most bold because they are the most safe to cry out their reproaches to his face).

The master was cried up for a saint. It was remembered how he had never had any hand in pressing the tenants; as, indeed, no more he had, except to spend the money. He was a little wild perhaps, the folks said; but how much better was a natural, wild lad that would soon have settled down, than a skint and a sneek-draw, sitting, with his nose in an account book, to persecute poor tenants. One trollop, who by all accounts had been very badly used by the master, yet made herself a kind of champion of his memory. She sang a stone one day at Mr. Henry.

"Whaur's the bonnie lad that trustit ye?" she cried.

Mr. Henry reined in his horse and looked upon her, the blood flowing from his lip. "Ay, Jock!" says he. "You, too! And yet ye should ken me better." For it was he who had helped her with money.

she made as if she would cast, and he, to ward himself, threw up the hand that held his riding rod.

"What, would ye beat a lassie, ye ugly?" cries she, and ran away screaming as though he had struck her.

Next day word went about the country like wildfire that Mr. Henry had beaten Jessie Brown within an inch of her life. I give it as one instance of how this snowball grew, and one calumny brought another, until my poor patron was so perished in reputation that he began to keep the house like my lord. All this while, you may be sure he uttered no complaints at home; the very ground of the scandal was too sore a matter to be handled; and Mr. Henry was very proud and strangely obstinate in silence. My old lord must have heard of it, by John Paul, if by no one else; and he must at least have remarked the altered habits of his son. Yet even he, it is probable, knew not how high the feeling ran; and as for Miss Alison, she was ever the last person to hear news, and the least interested when she heard them.

In the height of the ill-feeling for it died away as it came, no man could say why there was an election forward in the town of St. Brides, which is the next to Durradeer, standing on the Water of the Swift, some grievous quarreling. I forget what it ever I heard; and it was currently said there would be broken heads ere night, and that the sheriff had sent as far as Dumfries for soldiers. My lord moved that Mr. Henry should be present, assuring him it was necessary to appear for the credit of the house.

"It will soon be reported," said he, "that we do not take the lead in our own country."

"It is a strange lead that I can take," said Mr. Henry; and when they had pushed him further, "I tell you the plain truth," he said, "I dare not show my face there."

"You are the first of the house that ever said so," cries Miss Alison.

"We will go all three," said my lord; and sure enough he got into his boots the first time in four years—a sore business John Paul had to get them on, and Miss Alison into her riding coat, and all three rode together to St. Brides.

The streets were full of the riff-raff of all the country side, who had no sooner clapped eyes on Mr. Henry than the hissing began, and the hooting, and the cries of "Judas!" and "Where was the master?" and "Where were the poor lads that rode with him?" Even a stone was cast; but the more part cried shame at that, for my old lord's sake and Miss Alison's. It took not ten minutes to persuade my lord that Mr. Henry had been right. He said never a word, but turned his horse about, and home again, with his chin upon his bosom. Never a word said Miss Alison; no doubt she thought the more; no doubt her pride was stung, for she was a home bred Durie; and no doubt her heart was troubled to see her cousin so unjustly used. That night she was never in bed; I have often heard myself when I call to mind that night, I really forgive her all; and the first thing in the morning she came to the old lord in his usual seat.

"If Henry still wants me," said she, "he can have me now." To himself she had a different speech: "I bring you no love, Henry; but God knows, all the pity in the world."

June the first, 1748, was the day of their marriage. It was December of the same year that first saw me alighting at the doors of the great house; and from there I take up the history of events as they befell under my own observation, like a witness in a court.

### CHAPTER II.

STATE OF AFFAIRS AT DURRADEER DURING THE MASTER'S WANDERINGS.

MADE the last of my journey in the cold end of December, in a mighty dry day of frost; and who should be my guide but Pater Macmorland, brother of Tam! For a tow headed, bare legged sort of 10, he had more than taken upon his tongue than ever I heard the match of, having drunken times in his brother's cup. I was still not so old myself. Pride had not yet the upper hand of curiosity; and indeed it would have taken any man that cold morning to hear all the old clashes of the country and he shown all the places by the way where strange things had fallen out. I had tales of Calcechouse as we came through the bogs, and tales of the devil as we came over the top of the scur.

As we came in by the abbey I heard somewhat of the old monks, and more of the free traders, who use its ruins for a magazine, landing for that came within a cannon shot of Durradeer; and along all the road, the Duries and poor Mr. Henry were in the first rank of slander. My mind was thus highly prejudiced against the family I was about to serve, so that I was half surprised when I beheld Durradeer himself, lying in a pretty, sheltered bay, under the Abbey hill—the house most commodiously built in the French fashion or perhaps Italianate, for I have no skill in these arts, and the place the most beautiful with gardens, lawns, shrubberies and trees I had ever seen. The money sunk here unproductively would have quite restored the family; but as it was, it cost a revenue to keep it up.

Mr. Henry came himself to the door to welcome me; a tall, dark young gentleman (the Duries are all black men) of a plain and not cheerful face very strong in body but not so strong in health; taking me by the hand without any pride, and putting me at home with plain, kind speeches. He led me into the hall, booted as I was, to present me to my lord. It was still daylight, and the first thing I observed was a lounge of clear glass in the midst of the shield in the painted window, which I remember thinking a bluish on a room otherwise so handsome, with its family portraits, and the parquetry ceiling with its pendents, and the carved chimney, in one corner of which my old lord sat, reading in his library. He was like Mr. Henry, with much the same plain countenance, only more subtle and pleasant, and his talk a thousand times more entertaining. He had many questions to ask me, I remember, of Edinburgh college, where I had just received my mastership of arts, and of the various professions, with whom and their proficiency he seemed well acquainted; and thus, talking of things that I knew, I soon got liberty of speech in my new home.

In the midst of this came Mrs. Henry into the room; this was before the birth of Miss Katharine. She used me with more of condescension than the rest; I kept her in the third place of my esteem.

It did not take long before all Pater Macmorland's tales were blotted out of my belief, and I was become, what I have never since remained, a loving servant of the house of Durradeer. Mr. Henry had the chief part of my affection. It was with him I worked; and I found him an exacting master, keeping all his kindness for those hours in which we were unemployed, and in the steward's office not only leading me with work, but viewing me with a shrewd supervision. At length one day he looked up from his paper with a kind of timidity, and says he, "Mr. Macmorland, I think I ought to tell you that you do very well."

That was my first word of commendation, and from that day his jealousy of my performance was relaxed; soon it was "Mr. Macmorland" here and "Mr. Macmorland" there with the whole family; and for much of my services at Durradeer I have translated everything at my own time and to my own fancy, and never a farthing charged.

Even while he was driving me, I had begun to find my heart go out to Mr. Henry; no doubt partly in pity, he was a man so palpably unhappy. He would fall into a deep muse over our accounts, starting at the page or out of the window; and at those times the look of his face, and the sigh that would break from him awoke in me strong feelings of curiosity and commiseration. One day, I remember, we were late upon some business in the steward's room. This room is in the top of the house and has a view upon the bay, and over a little wooded cape, on the long sands; and there, right over against the sea which was then dipping, we saw the free traders with a great force of men and horses scouring on the beach. Mr. Henry had been staring straight west, so that I marvelled he was not blinded by the sun; suddenly he frowned, rubs his hand upon his brow, and turns to me with a smile.

"You would not guess what I was thinking," says he. "I was thinking I would be a happier man if I could ride and run the danger of my life with these lawless companions."

I told him I had observed he did not enjoy good spirits; and that it was a common fancy to envy others and think we should be the better of some change; quoting Horace to the point, like a young man fresh from college.

"Why, just so," said he. "And with that we may get back to our accounts."

It was not long before I began to get wind of the causes that so much depressed him. Indeed a blind man must have soon discovered that there was a shadow on that house, the shadow of the Master of Ballantrae. Dead or alive (and he was then supposed to be dead) that man was his brother's rival; his rival abroad, where there was never a good word for Mr. Henry and nothing but regret and praise for the master; and his rival at home, not only with his father and his wife, but with the very servants.

They were two old serving men that were the leaders. John Paul, a little bald, solemn stomachy man, a great professor of piety and (take him for all in all a pretty faithful servant, was the chief of the master's faction. None durst go so far as John. He took a pleasure in denouncing Mr. Henry publicly, often with a slighting comparison. My lord and Mrs. Henry took him up, to be sure, but never so resolutely as they should; and he had only to pull his weeping face and begin his lamentations for the master—"his laddie," as he called him—to have the whole condoned. As for Henry, he let these things pass in silence, sometimes with a sad and sometimes with a black look. There was no rising of the dust, he knew that and how to keep his own counsel; and he knew that his own an old serving man for a man of loyalty was more than he could see. His was not the tongue to do it.

Macnechie was chief upon the other side; an old, ill-speeched, swearing, ranting, drunken dog; and I have often thought it an odd circumstance in human nature that these two serving men should each have been the champion of his contrary, and blackened their own faults and made light of their own virtues when they belied them in a master. Macnechie had soon snuffed out his secret inclination, took me much into his confidence, and would rant against the master by the hour.

My old lord was uniformly kind to Mr. Henry; he had even pretty ways of gratitude, and would sometimes clasp him on the shoulder and say, as if to the world at large: "This is a very good son to me." And grateful he was no doubt, being a man of sense and justice. But I think that was all, and I am sure Mr. Henry thought so. The love was all for the dead son. Not that this was often given breath to, indeed with me, but once Mr. Henry had asked me one day how I got on with Mr. Henry, and I had told him the truth.

"Ay," said he, looking sideways on the burning fire, "Henry is a good lad, a very good lad," said he. "You have heard, Mr. Macmorland, that I had another son. I am afraid he was not so virtuous a lad as Mr. Henry; but dear me, he's dead. Mr. Macmorland, and while he lived we were all very proud of him, all very proud. If he was not all he should have been, he was a good deal better than I am."

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place was very ill inhabited, mostly by the free trading sort. There was a man with a broomhead at the corner; half way up, in a tavern, fellows were roaring and singing, though it was not yet 9 in the day. Altogether I had never seen a worse neighborhood even in the great city of Edinburgh, and I was a two minds to go back. Jessie's room was of a piece with her surroundings, and herself no better. She would not give me the receipt (which Mr. Henry had told me to demand, for he was very methodical) until she had sent out for spirits and I had pledged her in a glass; and all the time she carried on in a light headed, reckless way, now aping the manners of a lady, now breaking into unseemly mirth, now making coquetish advances that oppressed me to the ground. Of the money she spoke more tragically.

"It's blood money," said she. "I take it for that; blood money for the betrayed. See what I brought down for the betrayed. See the bonnie lad were back again, it would be changed days. But he's dead—he's lying dead among the Highland hills—the bonnie lad, the bonnie lad!"

She had a rapt manner of crying on the bonnie lad, clasping her hands and casting up her eyes, that I think she must have learned of strolling players; and I thought her sorrow very much of an affection, and that she dwelled upon the business because her shame was now all his and to be proud of. I will not say I did not pity her, but it was a loathing pity at the best, and her last change of manner wiped it out. This was when she had had enough of me for an audience, and had set her name at last to the receipt.

"There," says she, and taking the most unwomanly cooing upon her tongue, bade me begone and carry it to the ladies who had sent me. It was the first time I had heard the name applied to Mr. Henry. I was staggered, besides at her sudden change of mood and manner, and got forth from the room, under this shower of curses, like a beaten dog. But even then I was not quit, for the vixen threw up her window and, leaning forth, continued to revile me as I went up the wind; the free traders, coming to the tavern door, joined in the mockery, and one had even the immaturity to set upon me a very savage, small dog, which bit me in the ankle. This was a strong lesson, but I required one, to avoid all company, and I rode home in much pain from the bite and considerable indignation of mind.

Mr. Henry was in the steward's room, affecting employment, but I could see he was only impatient to hear of my errand.

"Well," says he, as soon as I came in, and when I had told him something of what passed, and that Jessie seemed an understanding woman and far from grateful ("She is no friend to me," he said; "but indeed, Macmorland, I have few friends to boast of; and Jessie has some cause to be unkind. I need not dissemble what all the country knows—she was not very well used by one of our family." This was the first time I had heard him refer to the master, even distantly; and I think he found his tongue, because I had for that much, but presently he recovered. "This is why I would have nothing said. It would give pain to Mrs. Henry—and to my father," he headed with another dash.

"Mr. Henry," said I, "if you will take a freedom at my hands, I would tell you to let that woman be. What servants' quarrels are to the like of her? She has no secrets; and I am economy; as for gratitude, you will as soon get milk from a windmill; and if you will pretermit your bounty, it will make me change at all but just to waste the anxiety of your messengers."

Mr. Henry smiled. "But I am grieved about your ankle," said he, the next moment, with a proper gravity.

"And observe," I continued, "I give you this advice upon consideration; and yet my heart was touched for the woman in the beginning."

"Why, there it is, you see," said Mr. Henry. "And you are to remember that I knew her once a very decent lass. Besides, I much, although I speak little of my family, I think much of all sorts."

And with that he broke up the talk, which was the first we had together in such a calm tone. But the same afternoon I had proof that his father was perfectly acquainted with the business, and that it was only from his wife that Mr. Henry kept it secret.

"I fear you had a painful errand today," says my lord to me, "for which, as it appears to me, you were obliged to go to the house of Mr. Henry. He should have neglected how very desirable it is that no word of it should reach my daughter. Reflections on the dead, Mr. Macmorland, are doubly painful."

Anger glowed in my heart; and I could have told my lord to his face how little he had to do, bolstering up the image of the dead in Mrs. Henry's heart, and how much better he were employed to smother that false idol. For by this time I saw very well how the land lay between my patron and his wife.

My pen is clear enough to tell a plain tale; but to render the effect of an infinity of small things, no one great enough to write, and to translate the mystery of looks, and the message of voices when they are saying no great matter, and to put in half a page the essence of near eighteen months, this is what I despair to accomplish. The fault, to be very blunt, lay all in Mrs. Henry. She felt it a merit to have consented to the marriage, and she took it like a martyrdom, in which my old lord, whether he knew it or not, fomented her. She made a merit, besides, of her constancy to the dead, though its name to a poor creature should have seemed rather diabolical to the living; and here also my lord gave her his countenance. I suppose he was glad to talk of his loss, and ashamed to dwell on it with Mr. Henry. Certainly, at least, he made a little cooery apart in that family of three, and it was the husband who was what out.

It seems it was an old custom when the family were alone in Durradeer that my lord should take his wine to the chimney side, and Miss Alison, instead of withdrawing, should bring a stool to his knee and chatter to him, privately; and after she had become my patron's wife the same manner of doing was continued. It should have been pleasant to behold this ancient gentleman so loving with his daughter, but I was too much a partisan of Mr. Henry's to be anything but wroth at his exclusion. Many's the time I have seen him make an obvious resolve, quit the table and go and join himself to his wife and my Lord Durradeer; and on their part they were never backward to make him welcome, hurrying to him smilingly as to an intruding child, and took him into their talk with an effort so ill concealed that he was soon back again beside me at the table, whence so great is the hall of Durradeer we could but hear the murmur of voices at the chimney. There he would sit and watch, and I along with him; and sometimes by my lord's head sorrowfully shaken, or his hand laid on Mr. Henry's head, or his knee upon his knee, as if in conso-